

February 22, 2001

Honorable Norman K. Ferguson, Senate Chair
Honorable William R. Savage, House Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and Energy
115 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: LD 390, An Act to Require Telephone Utility Participation in Enhanced 9-1-1

Dear Senator Ferguson and Representative Savage:

The Commission will testify in favor of LD 390, An Act to Require Telephone Utility Participation in Enhanced 9-1-1. The Commission will be present at the work session and will be pleased to work with the Committee as it considers this bill.

The Commission does not have jurisdiction over the Enhanced 9-1-1 (E911) system. However, we have become aware of disagreements between the local exchange carriers that we regulate and the Emergency Services Communication Bureau (ESCB) regarding some aspects of E911 implementation. We have a direct interest in ensuring that the utilities we regulate comply with State law. However, in the disputes we witnessed, the law did not clearly determine the appropriate action that carriers must take, and ESCB apparently did not have authorization to resolve the disputes. Based on this experience, we believe the implementation of the E911 system will occur more effectively if the law is clarified.

In particular, carriers and ESCB have disputed the extent to which data must be complete before a carrier delivers the data to ESCB's designee. We also understand that, perhaps as a result of this dispute, some carriers did not deliver data within the time established by ESCB. We do not have the expertise to know whether carriers should deliver data that is partially incomplete (e.g., unknown street names). It seems to us that ESCB is responsible for the E911 system and therefore should be authorized to determine the criteria for useable, safe data. LD 390 appears to grant that authority by demanding that carriers provide information "in accordance with the rules adopted by the bureau."

LD 390 contains two definitions that do not currently exist in State law. We believe that these definitions are compatible with current law. We understand that "local exchange telephone utility" includes both incumbent carriers and competitive carriers. We understand this to be the correct definition for the purposes of LD 390.

In summary, we support LD 390 because it resolves an ongoing dispute by granting responsibilities to ESCB that the bureau does not currently have. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Marjorie R. McLaughlin
Legislative Liaison